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FACT SHEET

Support to the Electoral Process (STEP)

OVERVIEW

The Support to the Electoral Process (STEP) program supports increased electoral capacity and improved electoral administration in Afghanistan. Following the 2005 elections, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) assumed responsibility for all future elections, and STEP is working to build the capacity of the IEC to ensure the legitimacy of voter registration and the electoral process. The project focuses on pre-election preparations, election operations and logistics, as well as post-election sustainability. Specifically, STEP is working with the IEC to increase its institutional capacity in the lead up to the 2009/2010 elections, as well as to provide support to ensure transparency and broad-based participation in the electoral process in Afghanistan.

ACTIVITIES

- Supporting the long-term institutional development of the Afghan Independent Election Commission through staff recruitment and training, budgeting assistance, communications plan development, and other elections administration support.
- Supporting the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan in the implementation of a fair and transparent electoral process at the national and sub-national levels.
- Supporting the establishment of a sustainable permanent voter register.
- Enhancing the ability of the Independent Election Commission to implement election-related activities that are equally accessible to all Afghan citizens.
- Encouraging the participation of women in the electoral process in Afghanistan.
- Working with local NGOs to encourage participation in the election process in Afghanistan.

RESULTS

- Helped the IEC establish a Voter Registration Operations Center – a centralized call center and database for providing information and recording comments and complaints about the registration process. Since its launch in October 2008, the center has received more than 60,000 calls.
- Established an Election Education Center, which has trained 208 participants (104 men and 104 women) in election-related subjects.
- Founded and built the capacity of the Afghanistan Association of Electoral Officials, which will serve as an important clearinghouse for best practices on voter registration and electoral processes.
- Supported five study tours for IEC commissioners and senior staff to enhance knowledge of universal election administration practices.
- Provided significant election administrative support, including developing a timeline for the elections, developing campaign and other regulations, helping formulate candidate nomination procedures, supporting translation services, and providing technical IEC staff training on computer programs and the English language.
- Provided technical assistance on issues such as vote counting procedures, campaign finance regulations, electoral complaints, polling station procedures, and media monitoring and regulations.
- Ensured the functionality of IEC headquarters and regional and provincial offices through the provision of IT equipment, generators, furniture, and other supplies.
- Established a Security Operations Center at the IEC to coordinate security matters with various agencies during the election campaign process, election day, and post election activities.